

But we must be careful not to interpret "community" sentimentally; that is, not as a group of people whose aim is merely to make life comfortable and pleasant for each other, appeasing the inevitable tensions. A true community, like an organism, is based upon the variety of its members and upon the difference of their functions. An organism unifies and binds its separate parts into a whole without destroying the difference between the parts. In a whole the individual becomes unexchangeable and irreplaceable. Only within a community, therefore, can one exist as an individuality.

A community may be considered in three ways. First, it is never a completed structure. The life of the whole depends upon the life of its parts; it must constantly be formed anew. Thus, a community is a task. Second, as a whole, it subordinates all its parts in one general order. Out of a community, therefore, laws and obligations arise. And finally, a community is a place where, in spiritual confrontation with others, it is possible for a person to realize himself.

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Education can help us acquire new knowledge and understanding only if previously a purgation from old errors and mistakes has taken place. It must, therefore, be one of our main tasks to erase the erroneous idea that individuality is equivalent to eccentric peculiarity. Those problems which vexed the great men, thinkers and artists, statesmen and saints, must become our own concern, whatever our natural talents may be. We need to cultivate them, not in a snobbish manner separated from our daily life, but at its center. It is certainly not legitimate to expect education to breed geniuses; but it certainly is its function to establish or perhaps to re-establish the right relation between every-day life and the eternal problems. That is, the great problems should penetrate and mold daily life; yet preoccupation with them should not prevent and excuse us from proving true in the small affairs of every day.

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ERWIN STRAUS

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